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Canadian
Born Vancouver, November 1954

1.OBJECTIVE

Assistant Professor in the UBC Theatre Department
Film Division.

2.EDUCATION

2.1. Highschool: Hamber (Vancouver) and Hillside (West Vancouver) (1968-73)

The theme of my adult life was presaged when I scored 99% in both science and art on the "Aptitude Inventory" test (1969). On my own initiative, I made three animated films, including one on animation techniques for the UBC Faculty of Education Department of Communications Media and Technology, 1972. (For films see 10.1.7-9; for awards see 7.1.3&5.) Upon graduating I had earned a certificate from the National Educational Development Tests (1969), a provincial government scholarship in Math and Biology (1973), and an exemption granted for First Year Biology at UBC.

2.2. University of British Columbia -- B.Sc. in Zoology (1973-77)

I combined Science courses with Film and other Arts courses, cultivating rigorous thinking along with aesthetic judgment. My major focus in the life sciences was evolution theory, for which I earned First Class grades in 6 units of Directed Studies. Arts courses included the following:

- o Fine Arts 181 "Studio 1" (First Class)
- o Psychology 200 "Experimental Psychology", and Psychology 300 "Behaviour Disorders" (First Class).
- o Film Production Courses (First Class):
Theatre 334 "Animation" with Al Sens (1975) and Theatre 333 "Introduction to Film Production" with John Newton (1976).
I made two films (3.1) that each won awards (7.1.3&4).

In addition to course work I wrote a feature-length theatrical screenplay (10.2.6), and co-authored a science text (10.5.1). Upon graduating with a Second Class, I obtained scores on the Graduate Record Exam of 58, 73, and 97 percentile in quantitative, verbal, and analytical abilities respectively.

1987

(Jan 1988?)

2.3. UBC Fifth-Year Teacher's Training Certificate (Fall 1977)

After teaching a Grade 9 Science two-week practicum I became disillusioned with the prospect of a career in public school teaching, and I completed only the first semester courses. During this period I also made a 20-minute sponsored educational film (3.2).

2.4. Simon Fraser University Film Workshop -- Fourth Year production (Fall 1978)

Based on the screening of an experimental film made on a Canada Council grant that summer (3.2 and 10.1.3), I was admitted to a Fourth Year production course. With producers Tony Westman and Al Razutis, I directed and edited a sync-sound film with a production crew of five (3.1 and 10.1.2).

2.5. University of Southern California, School of Performing Arts, Cinema Department -- M.F.A. in Film Production (1979-81)

I was granted a rare exemption from prerequisite production courses due to prior achievements, though in hindsight this was a disadvantage in this "mini-Hollywood" since, subsequently, other students at my level had not worked with me. Courses included the following (cumulative GPA 3.0):

<u>COURSE (Grade):</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR:</u>
Production Planning(C)	Don Kranze (at A.I.P.)
Informational Film(A)	Ben Shedd (<i>The Gossamer Condor</i>). Mitchell Block (Direct Cinema Ltd.; member of Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences)
Film Processing(A)	Through CFI labs
Sound(A)	Dan Wiegman
History/Criticism(B)	Marsha Kinder (co-author of <i>Self And Cinema</i> . Contributor to <i>Film Quarterly</i>)
Film Genres(B)	Rick Jewell
Directing(B)	Eric Morris (<i>No Acting Please</i>)
Screenwriting(A)	Ken Evans (Story Editor, Universal)
Filmic Expression(B)	Bruce Block
Production Workshop(C)	Ken Miura (sound)
Thesis film(B)	Advisor: Mel Sloan (see 3.1)

Filmmaking included exercises in visual expression, participation on a student crew (3.1), and my thesis film (3.1). Writing included film proposals and grant applications (NEA, PBS, AFI, Canada Council, NFB, McGraw-Hill Films), two feature screenplays (10.2.4&5), and three papers on film criticism (10.3.1-3).

3. FILM PRODUCTION (1969-81)

In addition to experience as a below-the-line crew person, I have produced and directed eight 16mm optical-sound short films of my own, animating three of them, often filling all crew positions, as highlighted below.

3.1. Student Films (16mm)

Through UBC (2.2) I produced two films: one, an abstract animated film, *Anizen*, which illustrated a Zen concept, and the other, a 30-minute, sync-sound, surrealist dream-sequence, *REM*, on which I was author and crew. Awards for these two films are listed in 7.1.

At SFU and USC (2.4, 2.5) I shifted focus from art to drama. As writer/director/editor of *Breakfall* (1978), produced by SFU with a full crew, I emphasized an editing technique that fused flashback with fantasy. Though the technique was effective, I had more to learn about drama. In contrast, my USC M.F.A. thesis film *Look Twice* (1980), on which I was sole crew (post-sync), is a strong action-drama. In this film experiment, a story is shot twice, using a different cinematic style each time to produce a contrast in feeling and interpretation. The style of each diverges in stages from a common point of departure, in order to determine, from audience surveys, at what point the difference in interpretation becomes apparent. The result this time was that drama overshadowed technique, which I have taken as a valuable learning experience.

On a ten-person sync-sound USC production, *Takeover* (1979), I was responsible for all production and post-production sound. This, combined with my experience in sound on *Look Twice* (above), greatly enhanced my understanding of the potential and flexibility of sound recording and cutting techniques.

3.2. Independent Films (16mm)

Apart from early animated films (10.1) and films made under University auspices (above), I produced two films independently. *Over a New Leaf* is an educational film on Northwest Coast nature and Indian knowledge, focusing on Lighthouse Park. It was sponsored by the West Vancouver Parks and Recreation Dept., the National Film Board, and Crown Zellerbach in 1977 (post-sync). In 1978, *Splitstream* was financed by a Canada Council Film Production Grant with Tim Sales as cinematographer. This sync-sound film was experimental, splitting the screen horizontally between simultaneous objective and subjective views of the same incident (for awards see 7.1).

3.3. Summary of Technical Skills and Experience

- o Editing: editing on both upright and flatbed machines for three sync-sound films and five post-synchronized films, plus A&B rolling and negative cutting.

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- o Sound: recording (3 Nagra models), transferring, effects cutting, and mixing up to 10 tracks; acted as "Qualified Sound Technician" for USC Cinema Department.
 - o Cinematography: operation of Arriflex, Eclair, and Bolex-EBM sound cameras and various non-sync cameras; camera assistant on independent 35mm short, *Chrissy and Me*, Los Angeles, 1979.
 - o Animation: drawing and shooting of four animated films (10.1) on paper and acetate cels, and pixilation.

4. SCREENWRITING (1977-86)

As leverage toward eventually directing features, I focused on writing original material in the hope of becoming a successful screenwriter. Screenwriting soon became an end in itself.

4.1 Professional Development (1981 - 86)

For a period of six years after finishing at USC I wrote original treatments for features and completed three more original feature screenplays. My dramatic writing to date (10.2) covers several genres :

- o six feature screenplays
- o seven feature treatments
- o two short screenplays

The year of 1983 was spent pitching stories to producers in Hollywood, represented by Cheryl Weiss at Shapiro/Lichtman Literary Agency. Responses were encouraging -- to quote a letter from MGM, "you should be considered for your clarity of style, suspense-building ability, and sense of humor" (Carol Gomez-Robelo, reader for Fred Weintraub, Feb. 1984) -- but my experience confirmed the old adage that "Hollywood is a place where you can die of encouragement".

Most recently, my screenplay *Critical Mass* was accepted by the American Film Institute's prestigious Screenplay Development Workshop, Los Angeles, 1987. I had to decline the opportunity because of an alternative offer of an option on the same script by a Los Angeles production company (signed in November 1987, see below).

4.2 Options Sold:

Three screenplay options have been sold to producers in Los Angeles (10.2):

- o in 1981 to Licht/Mueller Films at Warners;
- o in 1983 to Rudy Romero, graduate of the USC Peter Stark Producing Program;
- o and in 1987 to MTA/Persik Productions, producers of *The Mission* (Best Film at the Lacarno Film Festival, Switzerland, 1983), *Checkpoint* (which opened at the American Independent Film Festival in November 1987), and *Easy Prey* (to be released by Aurora in 1988).

4.3. Script-writing Employment

- o Writing: Since 1984 I have made a living as a technical writer in Vancouver (5.1). During this time I have been employed on several small projects. I was hired by The Alcyone Network to develop a treatment for a feature, *The Nth Degree* (1984). I wrote six comedy radio spots for Massey Productions, produced in 1985. And I wrote a promotional video produced by Mott Communications (Toronto) for Trans Atlantic Resources, a company on the VSE, in 1986.
- o Story Analyst: In Los Angeles during 1983 I worked as a freelance reader for NBC (one teleplay), Charles Fries Productions (two novels), and Home Box Office (one feature, *Blackout*, which I recommended, and was later shot in Vancouver). In Vancouver in 1984 I read confidentially for Telefilm Canada (one short and one feature); exposure to the widespread lack of professionalism in Canadian scripts at that time prompted me to point out to Telefilm (Donna Wong-Juliani) the need for a manual on standardized screenplay format.
- o Screenwriting teacher: In Vancouver I taught at the Institute of Communication Arts in 1984 and 1987, as discussed in 6.1.

5. OTHER WRITING

5.1. Professional technical writer

From 1984 to 1988 I have worked in Vancouver on contract and on staff, in both engineering and marketing departments, writing and supervising the development of user manuals and promotional material for corporations such as Sydney Development (1984), Glenayre Electronics (1985/86), MacDonald Dettwiler & Associates (1987), and Mobile Data International (1987).

5.2. Science writing

Though it was during my undergraduate years that I wrote on scientific topics, I was recently short-listed for the position of Science Writer by the Director of UBC's TRIUMF Nuclear Research Facility (Eric Vogt, 1985). Works on science include the following:

- o *From Above the Web: A New Look at Physics and its Extensions* is a 400-page general science text (unpublished) based on my idea of using visual flow-charts to show the development and connection of major ideas. I was co-author on an Opportunities For Youth grant in 1975.
- o *Towards a New Synthetic Theory of Evolution* is my undergraduate directed-studies thesis on the problems with evolution theory (70 pages, 1978).

- o *Hierarchies of Life* (1978) is a script for a proposed educational film that would combine an allegorical stage play with interviews and graphics to reveal the hierarchical structure of living systems.

5.3. Journalism

Minor works of journalism include a report for the USC Alumni newsletter, and a short article commissioned by a Vancouver psychotherapist (see 10.4).

6. TEACHING

6.1. Experience

I taught two 64-hour semesters of "Writing for Film, Television, and Radio" at the Institute of Communication Arts, Vancouver, in Spring 1984 and Spring 1987.

The 1984 semester focused on these basics of screenwriting: the relationship between crisis, character, theme, and premise; standard three-Act structure (for both script and scene) including inciting incident, obligatory scene, and reversals; exposition through conflict; format and pacing; scripting with action, visuals, and sound; dialogue economy, subtext, and indirection; characterization; theory of comedy; selling and discipline.

Exercises included screening a feature film on video in reference to the original screenplay; graphing the reversals of a screened film; transcribing a screened film scene onto paper; class critiques and rewrites of students' oral story pitches and written scenes; and rewriting student scenes without dialogue. Evaluation was based on the progression of students' story from logline to three-Act structure to second-draft step-outline, and on scripted scenes to second draft. Classes were interactive throughout.

The 1987 semester expanded its scope to include radio and print copy, introducing guest speakers Martin Boryki (Reel West), Sandy Covack (Vidatron), and Kathleen Sayers (International Wordsmiths).

6.2. Philosophy of Teaching

General imperatives I would maintain include these: foster as creative an atmosphere as possible without sacrificing critical judgment; nurture the sense of wonderment that so often atrophies as we grow up; and promote knowledge of standard techniques as prerequisites to originality and productivity. More specifically, I would focus on the primacy of conflict and contrast at all levels of filmic expression; on non-verbal indices in conveying meaning; on the careful integration of theme with content and technique; and on the ability to justify a choice regardless of how intuitive its origin.

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I would hope to be receptive to students' unique experiences and ways of expressing themselves. I would try to help them find their place in the world of film, and to grasp such insights as the one expressed passionately by writer/director Frank Pierson : "Movies are not a visual medium. They are the management of time. And there is only one other art that is involved in time to the extent movies are, and that is music - its rhythm and its tempo. And if you can't dance, then you'd better not make movies." (Hollywood Scriptwriter, Sept. 1986)

7. AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

7.1. Film Awards

For films see 3.1, 3.2, or 10.1.

1. Long Island International Film Festival (Experimental), 1979 -- First Prize for *Splitstream*.
2. Chicago International Film Festival, 1979 -- Fred A. Niles Communication Award for *Splitstream*.
3. The 6th, 7th, and 8th Annual BC Student Film Festivals:
 - First Prize (Secondary) for *Animartian*, 1974;
 - First Prize (Post-Secondary) and "Best-of-Show" for *Anizen*, 1975;
 - First Prize (Post-Secondary) and "Best-of-Show" for *REM*, 1976.
4. MOTION Canada's First Annual Canadian Film Awards for Young Filmmakers, 1976 -- First Prize (16mm) for *Anizen*.
5. Famous Players Second Canadian Student Film Festival, 1971, and Third Vancouver Student Film Festival, 1971 -- First Prizes (Secondary) for *Absurdo*.

7.2. Scholarships

- o Rotary Foundation Graduate Fellowship, Vancouver, 1978: \$10,000 toward graduate school in Film Production (used to attend USC, 1979).
- o The William Rea Fellowship in Television, Vancouver, 1978: \$1,500 administered through UBC for outstanding achievement in visual media; used to attend USC.

7.3 Special Recognition

- o Canada Council Film Production Grant, 1978: \$4,000 for production of *Splitstream*, 1978 (see 3.2).
- o Finalist in A.T.A.S. Film Editing Internship, Los Angeles, 1980.

- o Interviews and film screenings on Vancouver television programs, including Cable 10 with Martin Truax, 1976 (*Absurdo*, *Anizen*, and *REM*) and on the Bob Switzer Show, CBC, 1978 (*Over a New Leaf*).

8. PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- o Society for Technical Communication
- o Mensa Canada
- o American Film Institute
- o Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Society (past)
- o Canadian Filmmakers Distribution West (past)
- o USC Cinema-Television Alumni Association (past)

9. RESEARCH AND CREATIVE INTERESTS

9.1. Art, Science, Psyche

I have been trained mainly in craft, with less emphasis on theory. Though I have an analytical mind, my preference is to create. With the sanction of the Film Division I would focus on producing experimental films and writing screenplays. By "experimental film" I mean a personal expression or perception: art. On the other hand, an experimental film may be utilitarian; it may be literally a scientific experiment -- trying techniques for the express purpose of determining their effect on an audience and the resulting implications. I am interested in making this second type of experimental film as well. Such empirical studies may be done to illuminate aspects of film craft, or as a tool for the investigation of the human psyche, and they would generate papers for publication. I believe the preliminary proposals listed below underscore my interest, as documented above, in Art, Science, and Psychology.

9.2. Possible Investigations

All of these investigations are intended to produce publications. All could be the result of speculations based on screenings and review of the literature. But many of them could go much deeper by producing films as experiments upon which to base empirical studies of viewer responses (or by designing audience questionnaires for selected films already produced).

Theoretical Criticism:

9.2.1. An analysis of narrative structure, character development, and implicit values in contemporary commercial films and film genres in reference to John Howard Lawson's classic theory of drama (*Theory and Technique of Playwriting*, 1960).

9.2.2. Jungian psychology revealed in film: Jung's basic personality types as found in screen characters, in moral values promoted in films, in genres, and in filmmakers themselves; and interpreting films in terms of Jung's archetypes.

9.2.3. Analysis of contemporary films in terms of Northrop Frye's system of "mythoi" (*Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957) -- do modern variations negate his system?

9.2.4. Understanding surrealism: Though I have made surrealist films myself, my rational mind has always felt uncomfortable with their meaning. I would attempt a reconciliation through a review of the critical literature, with particular emphasis on the connection between film experience and dreaming.

9.2.5. Analysis of the ambiguous dividing line between the satirical and the "realistic", as exemplified by screenwriter Paddy Cheyefsky's contention that his film *Network* is not a satire (*The Craft of the Screenwriter*, Brady, 1981).

9.2.6. The perception of rhythm in narrative film: a comparison of the art of film with the art of music.

Empirical Investigation of Craft:

9.2.7. Analysis of the science fiction genre in film: minimum and maximum constraints on plausibility -- what will be accepted, in what context, and to what degree a film can maintain scientific realism without losing the audience (e.g., no sound in outer space).

9.2.8. Investigation into the optimum methods of presenting conceptual educational subjects on film, to as wide an audience as possible, without trivializing the content. This would include analysis of technique, structure, and selection of content.

9.2.9. Experimentation with the psychological impact and dramatic applicability of sustaining extreme film techniques in otherwise normal narrative films, for example highly flattened perspective, extremely narrow depth of field, or backward motion run forward (a test film for the latter shows interesting effects). These would require film production.

9.2.10. Investigation into the emotional effect of offscreen sound sources and characters in the production of mystery and suspense.

Film as a Tool in Experimental Psychology:

9.2.11. Use of film in suggestion: empirical results of film techniques based on principles of hypnosis and subliminal perception.

9.2.12. Analytical Psychology: audience perception of Jung's archetypes and audience preferences for Jung's basic personality types as demonstrated by film characters and genres, particularly as revealed through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test.

Sociological Study:

9.2.13. The evolution of visual versus abstract thinking capacities in film audiences, in parallel with the history of film and television technique. Comparisons with Nineteenth Century Western and primitive societies, with reference to neuropsychological theories of brain hemisphere specialization.

9.2.14. A practical study of the financial infrastructure for indigenous film production in Vancouver (of both the dramatic and educational genres).

9.2.15. An analysis and critique of Vancouver feature filmmakers -- their values, styles, and visions -- with attention to any unifying theme distinguishing this milieu from Toronto or Los Angeles.

9.3. Possible Film Productions

Experimental Art

9.3.1. Tran Scan:

This experimental film has potential for commercial success and for international recognition for UBC. It would use a difficult-to-imagine technique of combining a telephoto lens with a gyroscopic stabilization device to allow production of a unique type of cross-country timelapse film which should be -- contrary to all other such films made to date -- an aesthetically beautiful and involving experience. The effect would be comparable to viewing through binoculars while travelling the Trans Canada Highway at 5,000 mph. The scenery would unfold gently as we cross Canada in 45 minutes without a single cut, preserving the continuity of the realtime experience.

Currently available gyroscopic stabilizing technologies cannot be used for this unusual purpose. Working with physicist-inventor Lorne Whitehead (9.3.3), in conjunction with the UBC Physics Department, the essential gyroscope device has been designed and can be built by Engineering-Physics students. A test film can then be shot to convince sponsors of its viability. A prototype has been partly developed at UBC and we are currently negotiating completion of the project. Other filmmakers involved in the promotion of this project prior to planning for this test film were Gene Boyko (NFB, *Helicopter Canada*), Steve DeNure (Ranch), and Hy Perspectives Media Group (*Somewhere Between*).

9.3.2. A return to experimental animation. In particular, I am interested in reviving production of *Salamander*, a 16mm film started in 1977 at UBC, which uses a rotoscoped image of one of the Anna Wyman Dancers improvising to a Jethro Tull song (already shot in sync) as the basis for the movement of abstract forms.

Other

9.3.3. A cinema verite documentary on Vancouver inventor-turned-entrepreneur Lorne Whitehead, head of TIR Systems, manufacturer of the Light Pipe.

9.3.4. *Hierarchies of Life* (see 5.2): I would be interested in reviving this educational film proposal under the auspices of UBC. This film is suitable as a pilot for a series that would examine biology, ecology, sociology, and psychology from a unifying point of view. Originated in 1977 with Dianne DeMille (UBC Genetics), we obtained letters of support from various Science Faculty members and we shot the final three-way discussion between Dr. Michael Ovenden (Astronomy/Geophysics, UBC), Dr. John Milsum (Health Care Systems, UBC), and Dr. Jack Cowan (Theoretical Biology, University of Chicago) at the UBC Museum of Man (16mm sync).

9.3.5. Associate Producer on the feature film *Critical Mass* - if shot in Vancouver -- from my own screenplay, now in financing stage with MTA/Persik Productions in Los Angeles.

9.3. Screenwriting

9.3.1. *Mind's Eye* is a concept for a feature film. In this story a boy with terminal cancer is taught by his doctors to use guided and receptive visualization, under hypnosis, in the hope of reversing his disease. He learns to communicate with his unconscious mind in the form of a "guide" who appears as his long-dead father. Soon the guide appears when he is not in trance, provoking him into a voyage of intrigue and self-discovery.

9.3.2. I am thinking of backtracking to an earlier version of my feature treatment *The Prometheus Effect* (10.2.15), entitled *The Wonderman Effect*, in which a highly intuitive, eccentric billionaire stock speculator brings together a group of brilliant young scientists to pursue their dreams, thereby catalyzing an unprecedented series of developments. The intention is experimental: to excite a mass audience by pure wonderment, undiluted by gratuitous manipulation.

9.3.3. Minor rewrites of my "ecological thriller" *Critical Mass* for MTA/Persik Productions, Los Angeles (4.2).